

CASE STUDY

National Postal Operator Significantly Reduces Time Spent on Print Management With Vasion Print

THE CUSTOMER

Hrvatska pošta (Croatian Post) is the national postal operator of the Republic of Croatia, a country of more than four million inhabitants on the Adriatic Sea. The Post was established in 1999 and now employs 10,000 people—roughly two-thirds of whom are responsible for staffing and overseeing the 1,016 physical post offices throughout the country. This makes the organization one of Croatia's most far-reaching service and retail networks.

Although the organization has expanded its product portfolio in recent years by implementing common digital processes like e-payments and digital TV, delivery of printed material and packages is still at the core of its business. Croatian Post's carriers deliver an estimated 20 tons of mail per day.

Printing is essential to the Post's operations, but managing 1,900 printing devices proved challenging in a fragmented environment that spans nearly 22,000 square miles. Since many of the post offices are located on the country's offshore islands, accessing all devices within their network is extremely difficult. These islands are jewels in Croatia's tourism industry, but their limited network connections to the mainland can interfere with remote administration and WAN printing.

A major turning point came in 2015, when the Post was preparing to launch its Citrix-based Private Cloud, an ambitious enterprise-wide initiative designed to optimize the organization's highly distributed environment by streamlining maintenance and services—printing in particular.



CHALLENGES

- A patchwork of ineffective print-management software hindered the organization's Private Cloud implementation.
- The tangle of rights management and group policy led to unreliable deployments in a VDI environment.
- Hard-to-troubleshoot driver issues were causing problems with print speed and printer deployments.

RESULTS

- Vasion Print's single holistic print management solution provides centralized management, ease of use, and bandwidth optimization.
- Accurate and reliable automated deployments are easy to configure and no longer require group policy.
- The consolidated printer-driver repository improved manageability and eliminated driver problems.

“We wanted the printing to be seamless. We didn’t want anybody to have to think about print management. But we couldn’t achieve that with the parent solution we were using at that time,” says Ivan Kruljac, who heads the IT Department at Croatian Post. Kruljac discovered Vasion Print’s enterprise print management solution at a Citrix Synergy event.

“I saw the banner that said, ‘Eliminate Print Servers,’ and of course it caught my eye,” he says. After learning about Vasion Print’s extensive capabilities, such as Citrix support, centralized management, and precise installations without group policy, he knew it would be right for Croatian Post and Private Cloud.

CHALLENGE 1

Enabling and Enhancing a Large-Scale Streamlining Initiative

As Croatian Post prepared to roll out its in-house Private Cloud solution, the organization’s IT team knew printing would play a key role in their effort to streamline administration and improve infrastructural efficiency across more than 1,000 locations. Yet their printer diversity and geographic spread of the print environment posed difficulties.

“All our printers are different. Different models, different suppliers, different vendors. We had Canon, HP, Sharp, Lexmark, Samsung, Xerox—everything that money could buy, we had. And we didn’t have any control or manageability over them,” says Kruljac. “Our first step was a Microsoft product, then SafeCom, then HP products. We tried anything we could to optimize bandwidth, optimize traffic, and optimize the experience our employees and our customers had with our Private Cloud solution.”

SOLUTION

After taking less than 48 hours to deploy across the entire organization, Vasion Print delivered “everything that it promised,” says Kruljac. Above all, he emphasizes how Vasion Print’s centralized Admin Console and broad printer compatibility provided the simplicity that had previously been so elusive.

“It was the simplicity of how it handles devices, the simplicity of administering the print environment, the simplicity in managing every single printer, even the simplicity of the reports. The greatest thing is that it’s all in one console, on one screen.”

By unifying Croatian Post’s print environment, reducing WAN traffic through direct IP printing, and replacing multiple subpar print management software packages with one small footprint solution, Vasion Print became fundamental to the success of their Private Cloud initiative.

CHALLENGE 2

Deploying Printers Accurately and Reliably in a Citrix Environment

Croatian Post relies on a combination of VMware servers and Citrix solutions such as Virtual Desktops, Gateway, and Endpoint Management to power its Private Cloud and to deliver applications and services to its thousands of remote sites. In Citrix, however, printing can be anything but straightforward. Deployments are often at the mercy of group policy contingencies, and even basic printer installations can be error-prone on account of all the moving parts in a virtual environment. Kruljac says he and his team grew increasingly frustrated by the complexity and unreliability of using group policy and Active Directory groups for printer deployments, especially when having to grant elevated rights.

“It was very hard for me or for my team to manage all that. So we tried to use locally installed printers, but that wasn’t such a good idea because the PDFs grew to 100MB or more. It seemed like hours between when you pressed ‘Print’ and the page printed out,” he says. “It wasn’t acceptable.”

SOLUTION

Vasion Print offers full and seamless integration with Active Directory as well as VDI environments like Citrix, but doesn’t require group policy for targeted printer deployments. That allowed Croatian Post to retain its preferred deployment schemes without having to grant elevated rights to staff at remote sites.

“With Private Cloud, our goal is to manage printers from one central location. I didn’t want to distribute a high level of administrative rights to the whole region or a certain part of Croatia,” says Kruljac, noting the comparative ease of setting up automated deployments in the Vasion Print Admin Console.

“The key benefit of Vasion Print is getting the right printer to the right user. When a user logs off and then logs on at another session, they will have the right settings and the right devices again.”

“I don’t have the problem of dealing with printers anymore. I go into the console, I install a new printer, I do some administration. It takes me less than a minute, and I’m done. Now I can concentrate on the other stuff. That was the goal, and that was what we got from Vasion Print.”

CHALLENGE 3

Eliminating Clandestine Printer-Driver Issues

Kruljac and his team didn't realize it immediately, but hard-to-troubleshoot driver compatibility issues had been causing ongoing problems with printer profiles and print servers. These problems affected printing speed and installations.

"We tried to deal with the printing delays by implementing print servers, but they weren't easy to manage in our Citrix environment because we were relying on a profile manager in Citrix," he says. "And when we used the SafeCom solution with the domain, group policy, and security groups from Active Directory, then we had problems with the profiles in the Citrix environment. We didn't know in the beginning it was because of print drivers, but it was."

SOLUTION

The consolidated and user-friendly driver repository in Vasion Print vastly improves manageability, eliminating many of the common driver conflicts that can fly under the radar, but cause widespread problems with printing, installation, and profiles across the print environment.

"Of the many great features of Vasion Print, the driver repository is the most beautiful thing. Two clicks, three check marks, and that's it," says Kruljac, describing the simple process of pushing out driver updates or removing redundant drivers. "When we switched to Vasion Print, not only did we gain seamless installation of printers throughout the environment, but we no longer have problems with our profiles because of print drivers."

Conclusion and Savings Summary

Croatian Post has had Vasion Print implemented since late 2016, and the solution's "simplicity and ease of use" have contributed to the success of the crucial Private Cloud initiative. Kruljac says his organization has also begun using Vasion Print's robust print auditing and reporting capabilities to "help plan our toner and our paper supply" and reduce the cost of consumables. Overall, Vasion Print has markedly reduced Croatian Post's time spent on print management.

"I don't have the problem of dealing with printers anymore," he says. "I go into the console, I install a new printer, I do some administration. It takes me less than a minute, and I'm done. Now I can concentrate on the other stuff. That was the goal, and that was what we got from Vasion Print."